

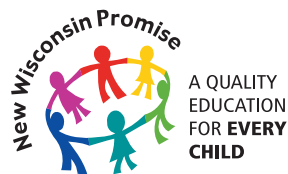
Wisconsin Success Stories



Tobacco Free Youth

Wisconsin Success Stories *Tobacco Free Youth*

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Introduction

Wisconsin school communities are demonstrating marked success in implementing effective programs and policies that help reduce tobacco use among youth.

The state's **Youth Risk Behavior Survey** demonstrates a significant reduction in smoking among high school students between 1993 and 2005:

- The incidence of students who smoked cigarettes during the past 30 days (current smoking rate) decreased from 32% to 23%.
- The percentage of students who began smoking before the age of 13 declined from 27% to 13%.
- Smoking on school property decreased from 13.5% to 6.5%.

The **Wisconsin Youth Tobacco Survey** indicates reduction in tobacco use by middle school youth from 2000 to 2004:

- The current smoking rate decreased from 12% to 7.7%.
- Current use of any tobacco product declined from 16% to 13%.

American Lung Association of Wisconsin results from the school-based N.O.T. smoking cessation program indicate:

- A 36% quit rate among student participants as measured at 6-8 weeks post-program completion.

Schools and their community partners employ various strategies to help young people choose tobacco-free lifestyles. Their successful efforts have common elements, most of which are based upon the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention guidelines to prevent tobacco use and addiction. These include the following:

- Strong school policies that are communicated and enforced.
- Science-based curricula.
- Trained and dedicated school staff.
- Effective community partnerships.
- Active youth leadership and involvement.
- Strong family support and involvement.
- A continuum of programming across all grade levels including prevention, intervention, and cessation.
- Evaluation of outcomes.
- Adequate funding and efforts toward sustainability.

There are many excellent examples of successful youth anti-tobacco programs throughout Wisconsin. Eight have been selected for inclusion in this publication, representing schools and communities of various sizes and locations. More information about each site can be obtained from the contacts listed at the end of each overview.

Our appreciation is extended to all who shared their stories for this publication.



Barron



The Barron School District has joined in a consortium with three other districts in their county—Cumberland, Prairie Farm, and Turtle Lake—to focus on student leadership development and advocacy in tobacco use prevention. Other partners in this consortium's efforts include the Barron County Tobacco Free Coalition, Barron County Health Department, Health and Human Services Department, and Family Works, a treatment foster care agency.

Trained high school peer helpers active in FACT (Fighting Against Corporate Tobacco) and T.A.T.U. (Teens Against Tobacco Use), lead anti-smoking education for fourth and sixth graders. These teens also organize awareness activities for their schools and community. For example, as an environmental awareness strategy, students collect cigarette butts in a special container to draw attention to the magnitude of the problem. Peer helpers actively serve on the Barron County Tobacco-Free Coalition and participate in compliance checks (making controlled attempts to buy tobacco products at local establishments) to ensure that tobacco products are not sold to those under 18. Currently, these young leaders are advocating for public policy to establish smoke-free restaurants and public buildings in their communities.

Parent partners are actively involved through the planning and implementation of smoke-free youth activities such as post-prom parties. They serve as committee members for specialized projects and receive communications about school anti-tobacco activities.

To ensure a comprehensive tobacco prevention program through middle school, all students take part in anti-tobacco education through the K-5 developmental guidance curriculum, the fifth grade DARE program (Drug Abuse Resistance Education), and the sixth and eighth grade DARE follow-up sessions taught by local law enforcement officers. All seventh graders learn about the dangers of tobacco use in the science-based LifeSkills Training program. Eighth graders apply this knowledge by developing commercials against tobacco use.

Impact: The **Search Institute Profiles of Student Life: Attitudes and Behaviors Survey** has demonstrated increasing numbers of Barron students reporting no smoking in the previous 30 days; an increase from 77% in 1997 to 83% in 2003. Likewise, eighth graders reporting no lifetime use of tobacco increased during the same time period from 73% to 90%. Eleventh graders who smoked no cigarettes during the previous two weeks increased from 69% in 1997 to 81% in 2003.

Tobacco policy violations are decreasing as well. While Barron High School students were charged with six tobacco policy violations during the 2003-04 school year, there was only one violation reported for 2004-05.

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Beloit

The Beloit School District tobacco prevention program focuses on three major goals: 1) decreasing the social acceptability of tobacco use by local youth, 2) providing access and referral to tobacco cessation programs for all middle and high school students, and 3) increasing family awareness of tobacco use, prevention, and cessation.

Through implementing several science-based programs, Beloit students of all ages have the opportunity to learn about making healthy choices. The foundation is laid in grades K-2 with the Here's Looking At You curriculum. Third through fifth graders learn anti-smoking concepts and the impact of tobacco advertising through the LifeSkills training program. Trained middle and high school youth conduct the Nicotine Is Kids' Enemy program (N.I.K.E.) for third through seventh graders. Sixth graders increase their prevention knowledge through the Project Alert curriculum. Seventh and eighth graders broaden their skills and knowledge through continued LifeSkills training. In the health curriculum, ninth graders further study tobacco use issues. Students in grades 6-12 look forward to the opportunity to join tobacco education groups.

First time violators of the district's smoking policies may avoid fines by participating in a smoking cessation program. The vast majority of students take advantage of this option, complete the classes, and do not violate a second time. These sessions are provided in cooperation with Tobacco Free Kids of Rock County.

The school district, law enforcement, the city health department, and the Rock County Partners for Prevention actively participate on this coalition. School officials find these partnerships to be a key factor in the success of their tobacco prevention efforts.

Youth use the knowledge they have gained through school programs to educate family members about the dangers of tobacco use during annual family fairs. Educational demonstrations and seasonal activities developed by students are fun and interactive, reaching as many as 650 family members per year.

With many smoking prevention/intervention components in place through past state grant funding, Beloit staff, students, and community partners now focus on environmental and community tobacco issues. For instance, an active FACT group has met with legislators on such topics as increasing the tobacco tax. In addition, FACT youth cooperated with local government officials in the preparation and promotion of smoke-free restaurant ordinances.

Impact: Smoking by Beloit students has dramatically decreased. Beloit High School measured a 50% drop in current student smokers, from 46% in 1997 to 23% in 2002. At the middle school level, the number of current smokers decreased by 70% for these same years, from 37% to 11%. Parents in attendance at the family fairs reported a better understanding of the dangers of second-hand smoke and a willingness to actively support their child's decision not to smoke as a result of these events. During the 2004-05 school year, 100 parents signed pledges supporting smoke-free environments in their home.

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Fond du Lac



The Fond du Lac School District and the Fond du Lac County Tobacco Control Coalition together implement comprehensive programs to: 1) prevent initiation of tobacco use by youth, 2) enable users to stop, and 3) reduce the number of school-age children who are exposed to tobacco smoke. Other partners joining this effort are the County Health Department, the area medical community, the American Heart Association, and the American Lung Association.

Students in grades K-2 receive anti-tobacco education through the science curriculum. Grades three through eight students are actively involved in the LifeSkills training program implemented by teams of instructors consisting of nurses, physical education teachers, classroom teachers, guidance counselors/social workers, and school resource officers. Tobacco education is included in the ninth grade health curriculum and infused in some high school science and environmental courses. The school nurses conduct the N.O.T. program (Not on Tobacco – smoking cessation program) at the middle and high school levels. Referrals to school and community cessation programs originate with community providers, parents, and students.

Parents are regularly educated about the risks of second-hand smoke, a combined effort of school and community partners, by means of a website and monthly articles in the local *Fond du Lac Reporter*. A joint letter from the school health programs coordinator, the fire chief, and the chairperson of the Fond du Lac County Tobacco Control Coalition encourages non-smoking parents to display a smoke-free decal at home.

Over 120 student FACT members train others on the dangers of second-hand smoke. In order to effectively present their policy initiatives to municipal officials and legislators, FACT youth learn how tobacco laws are proposed and passed. Teens also volunteer for compliance checks with the city health department. A youth member serves on the tobacco coalition. In June, youth staff a booth at Fond du Lac's famous Walleye Weekend, reaching out to the community about the dangers of second-hand smoke.

Impact: The percent of current smokers in grades 8, 10, and 11 (at least one cigarette in the past 30 days) dropped from 31% in 1992 to 20% in 2004. Close friends' disapproval of students smoking a pack of cigarettes per day rose from 68% in 1992 to 84% in 2004. Results of the 2004 district survey showed that 73% of students thought school programs had helped them understand that tobacco use is not safe or healthy and 25% strongly agreed to the helpfulness of school programs.

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Grant County

The Grant County Drug Free Coalition, supported by Grant County Health Department funds, serves youth in eleven school districts—Platteville, Lancaster, Fennimore, Iowa-Grant, River Ridge, Cassville, Cuba City, Southwestern, Potosi, Riverdale, and Boscobel—through the following strategies designed to ensure a comprehensive tobacco and other drug reduction/prevention approach:

- Annual Youth Leadership Conference for students grades 7-12 which is sponsored by a multi-county partnership.
- Use of research-based tobacco and other drug prevention programs/curricula in area schools including T.A.T.U. and N-O-T.
- Family community drug awareness suppers followed by smoke-free bowling nights. These evenings include prevention education programs with speakers and follow-up discussions.
- Initiation of annual campaigns such as clean indoor air ordinances.
- Joint alcohol/tobacco compliance checks to limit youth access.

The Grant County Drug Free Coalition includes broad representation: youth, parents, educators, law enforcement, health care, the judicial system, county government, as well as youth-serving organizations, civic and volunteer groups, religious organizations, businesses, state agencies, and the media. The coalition garners support from local businesses and civic groups, and depends heavily upon in-kind assistance in the form of volunteer time, supplies, and other types of support. In addition, members are striving to divert funds from citations issued as a result of tobacco and alcohol compliance checks to drug-free programming. An oversight committee now is developing a long-term sustainability plan and evaluation process.

The Coalition Youth Council plays a key role in the community as a sounding board for various agencies. Area youth become members of the council by attending the annual Youth Leadership Conference organized by their peers. Members pledge to be drug-free and strive to deliver a strong message to their peers and community.

Impact: In 2003, the tobacco sales rate to minors in Grant County dropped from 25% to 1.6%, and the alcohol sales rate dropped from 25% to 8%. (Sales rates are based on the number of successful controlled buys that underage individuals are able to complete for alcohol and tobacco products.) Youth Leadership Conference participants increased their knowledge of the harmfulness of tobacco use. Young people felt empowered to help each other become an effective force in prevention.

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Milwaukee

The Milwaukee Public Schools, with 57 secondary buildings (middle and high schools) and 125 elementary schools, target youth tobacco use *prevention* through peer education and advocacy and *intervention* through cessation and education programs.

All schools participating in the tobacco project:

- Assess their school's tobacco prevention efforts.
- Implement an action plan to address identified needs.
- Participate in selected training and tobacco-related activities.
- Conduct peer-to-peer education activities and cessation education as needed.
- Consider best practices in their programming.
- Administer the **Wisconsin Youth Risk Behavior Survey**.

A concentrated tobacco prevention effort occurs in grades six through eight using a variety of strategies. For example, all students participate in the LifeSkills Training Program. Select students attend a three-day peer education training camp preparing them to implement the T.A.T.U. curriculum with younger peers. The youth educators develop posters on tobacco-related topics such as social norms, the **Youth Risk Behavior Survey** data, and smoke-free environment information. These traveling posters are then framed and displayed in numerous community exhibits. Peer leaders also regularly attend statewide youth planning meetings.

In an effort to personalize their learning experience, middle and high school students interview people from the community to discover how they have been affected by tobacco use. The students spell out these stories on tee shirts that are then displayed on an outdoor fence for the entire community to view.

The N-O-T program has been initiated in several high schools to help current smokers quit. Offering cessation programming in additional high schools is a staff priority.

Key partners in the anti-tobacco efforts include the Milwaukee Community Tobacco Coalition, the American Lung Association of Wisconsin, and the Ethnic Network/Black Health Coalition, who are working on the Smoke-Free Milwaukee project. Parent partners take part in the peer education camps and the parent day for tobacco prevention activities. They are also involved through the parent component of the LifeSkills Training curriculum.

Tobacco policy violators in grades 7-12 will soon have a new educational opportunity as staff members begin to conduct educational groups based upon the program, Helping Teens Overcome Problems with Alcohol, Marijuana, and Other Drugs.

Impact: Current smoking rates among high school students dropped by more than a third, from 11.2% in 2001 to 7% in 2003 as measured by the **Youth Risk Behavior Survey**. The percent of students who never used tobacco rose from 49.6% in 2001 to 53.8% in 2003.

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Wausau

The Wausau School District tobacco prevention program has been designed to address two main goals:

- Sustaining youth leadership and advocacy
- Providing education and access to cessation programs for tobacco users.

Two part-time prevention activities specialists assist school staff and the community in coordinating a wide variety of tobacco-related activities.

After studying the dangers of tobacco use in their health classes, sixth graders visit third grade classrooms for one-to-one sessions with an anti-smoking coloring book. Sixth graders also participate in the NICoteen box program, allowing them to experience how addiction to smoking can control a person's life. They are required to carry a simulator for an entire weekend, repeating anti-smoking messages each time a pack-a-day smoker would light up.

Middle school students use their creative talents to send anti-smoking messages by way of billboard and grocery bag contests. The winning entries are then used on billboards throughout the community and on grocery bags at a local store. Marketing efforts such as the billboard project allow students to feel that the community values and reinforces their decisions to remain smoke-free.

Middle and high school members of TAPP (Teens Against Peer Pressure) instruct youth in grades kindergarten through five on topics such as decision-making, peer pressure, and healthy choices including the effects of tobacco use. Students in grades K-5 learn tobacco prevention concepts through the elementary guidance program while fifth graders learn the negative effects of tobacco and drugs through the DARE program.

TAPP students meet weekly to plan various activities such as Kick Butts Week focusing on issues like second-hand smoke. The group displays anti-smoking "human billboards" outside the school building and along busy traffic intersections to increase adult awareness. Advocacy is also an important TAPP goal. Together with local FACT members, youth assisted in the passage of a recent a smoke-free restaurant ordinance effort by gathering signatures on petitions and distributing informational literature.

At the high school level, students receive tobacco use prevention instruction through the health and physical education curricula. T.A.T.U. peer educators conduct lessons on tobacco prevention at several elementary schools. This past year, they gathered resource materials to be used for years to come in elementary instruction. A small but vocal group of teen activists are prominent in the statewide FACT movement. N-O-T cessation groups are offered in middle and high schools.

Impact: Due to the concerted effort by the school district and community, Wausau has seen significant improvement in youth choices regarding tobacco. In the last year alone, the percentage of high school students who have never smoked has increased 15%, from 60% in 2004 to 69% in 2005. Similarly, the percentage of current non-smokers has increased from 79% to 82%, nearly a 4% increase in one year! Only 3% of high school students reported in 2005 that they use smokeless tobacco compared to 5% the year before.

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West Allis – West Milwaukee

The West Allis-West Milwaukee School District anti-tobacco program includes a wide range of activities involving large numbers of students in peer leadership and education. Second-hand smoke is a huge issue in West Allis-West Milwaukee; 49% of students reported having a family member who smokes compared to 37% statewide. Therefore, many anti-tobacco efforts focus on this issue.

The West Allis Health Department, Police Department, parents, school staff, and the students themselves are key partners in this school district's successful anti-tobacco initiatives. This established support is critical to the sustainability of the various program components.

Students benefit from anti-tobacco curricula beginning in kindergarten with materials adapted from the American Lung Association. Older youth leaders and adults provide a West Allis Health Department program, You and Me Tobacco-Free, at grade 2. West Allis police officers present the DARE program to all fifth graders and trained seventh and eighth grade students conduct the T.A.T.U. program with sixth graders. All of the elementary schools participate in an anti-tobacco poster contest.

Every student in grade 8 participates in nine weekly Project Alert sessions. Plans are being made to move some of these lessons to grade 7 based upon the results of the Youth Risk Behavior Survey which indicated a need for the learning to take place at a younger age.

Middle school students also participate in Nico Free Teens, a peer education program which provides trained mentors and advocates for classmates who desire to quit smoking. In addition to this individual support, Nico Free

participants may also join a N-O-T smoking cessation group.

High school students are actively involved in FACT initiatives as well as the Teen Action Club, a leadership program that promotes healthy, drug-free lifestyles and empowers teens to support one another. The group recently received an award from the West Allis-West Milwaukee Education Foundation which honors outstanding educational programs.

Middle and high school students implement all-school tobacco prevention and awareness activities including a Kick Butts Day banner signing, no smoking pledges, testimonials about the dangers of tobacco use, public address announcements, and memory cards of those who have died from tobacco use.

Impact: On the 2005 Youth Risk Behavior Survey, 56% of students report that they have never tried smoking. Thirty-five students participated in smoking cessation programs.

Eight hundred students were trained as student leaders during the 2004-05 school year and more than 200 were actively involved in tobacco-free programs such as FACT, T.A.T.U., You and Me Tobacco-Free, and Nico Free Teens.

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Woodruff

Students and staff of this far-northern district partner with the Vilas County Tobacco Free Coalition and the local business community to increase awareness of the risks of tobacco use and second-hand smoke. A school tobacco grant launched a multi-faceted plan to accomplish this goal, including the infusion of proven anti-tobacco curriculum into health, science, social studies, and language arts across several grade levels. In addition, a strong parent component has been built into the program. Assessments of the effectiveness of the overall program will guide future planning.

The middle school age, so pivotal in healthy decision making, is the focus of peer education and intervention. Seventh grade students joined with high school FACT members to initiate the program with educational and fun activities on tobacco prevention and the long-term health effects of tobacco use. Thereafter, seventh graders took part in one special anti-tobacco activity per month, including a poster contest and the development of skits which were presented to the fifth graders. Activities were shared with the parents who were then asked to consider the impact of their own tobacco use on their families.

Fifth and seventh grade students celebrated remaining smoke-free by participating in a variety of healthy physical activities followed by a pizza party. Students in grades 6, 7, and 8 enjoyed a “Too Smart to Smoke” dance.

Two highlights of the first year’s events included:

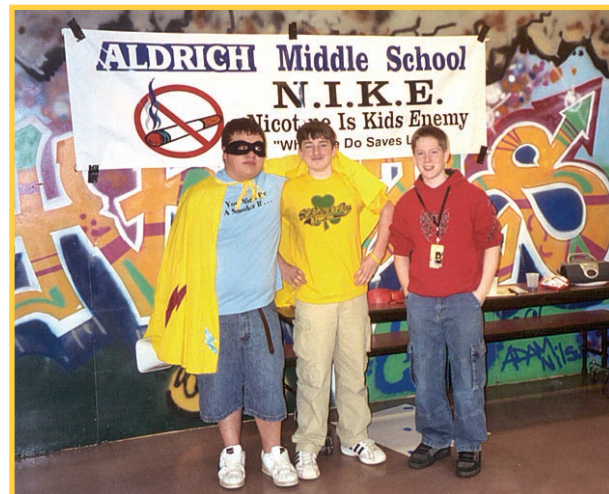
- A student-led, tobacco focused health fair featuring booths illustrating healthy body systems as opposed to unhealthy systems impacted by tobacco use.

- A successful table topic luncheon allowing students to share with their parents their new knowledge about tobacco use and to initiate conversations about adult use.

Impact: Students who participated in this “Too Smart to Smoke” anti-tobacco project completed pre- and post-surveys showing growth in their knowledge of tobacco facts from 76% on the pre-survey to 84% on the post-survey. Nearly 50% of the respondents stated that someone in their home smoked. Every one of these students indicated that he/she would like these smokers to quit.

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Conclusion



As a result of state, federal and local funding, training, and activities, more Wisconsin youth are vitally involved in school and community programs that assist them to remain tobacco-free. Through school policies and science-based programs, students learn about the dangers of tobacco use and develop the skills and commitment to resist media and social pressures. They apply this knowledge as active leaders in the field of tobacco prevention.

Advocacy results from such learning experiences and empowers students to develop life-long competencies as community activists. One Wausau student, Va Yang, a FACT activist for three years, shares her experiences: “FACT has given me so many opportunities to help my community and peers by providing me with the necessary tools to take action. FACT has provided me with the confidence to be expressive in my community about second-hand smoke, a smoke free ordinance and the tobacco industry in general, while improving my communication and problem-solving skills.”

Other benefits result from school tobacco programs. Youth engage their families in anti-smoking discussions and events. They educate their communities through informational fairs, billboards, and other means. More students quit smoking every year through school-based cessation programs. As a result of these and other activities, smoking among Wisconsin youth has declined significantly.

Continued support of youth tobacco prevention efforts through ongoing funding is critical to ongoing success. Tobacco prevention funds enable schools to initiate and maintain comprehensive tobacco prevention programs. Costs for staff time, training, and resources are prohibitive for many schools. While some aspects of school tobacco prevention programs could be sustained without additional funding, many others could not. Some strategies at risk would be:

- High quality teen leadership training like Milwaukee’s peer education camps,
- Social norms activities such as Wausau’s billboard project,
- Student-led community education events like Beloit’s family tobacco information fairs, and
- The maintenance of the most current programs and materials.

Policy-makers can make wise, cost-effective investments in school and other youth prevention programs.



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